

*Serial No. 10/772,554
Amendment dated Feb. 17, 2005
Reply to Office Action of Nov. 17, 2004*

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of folding a bag, the method comprising:
 - (a) providing an unfinished flat bottom bag having a sleeve defining a longitudinal direction and a transverse direction, the bag comprising a mouth end and a bottom end and longitudinal gussets extending from the mouth end to the bottom end, the bottom end having an unfinished base portion;
 - (b) opening the unfinished base portion and extending the gussets transversely;
 - (c) forming a fin extending transversely across the unfinished base portion by sealing an end-most portion of the bottom end while the fin is moving; and
 - (d) folding a first end and a second end of the fin against the unfinished base portion to form a base.
2. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of opening the unfinished base portion and extending the gussets transversely comprises:
 - (a) lifting a flap of the unfinished base portion prior to opening the unfinished base portion.
3. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of opening the unfinished base portion and extending the gussets transversely comprises:
 - (a) inserting an opening mechanism into the unfinished based portion between two sides of an end-most portion of the bottom end;
 - (b) moving the opening mechanism transversely to pull taught the end-most portion of the bottom end.
4. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of forming a fin comprises:

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- (a) forming a crease between [[an]] the end-most portion of the bottom end and the unfinished base portion; and then
- (b) sealing the end-most portion of the bottom end to form the fin.

5. (original) The method according to claim 4, wherein the step of sealing the end-most portion comprises:

- (a) moving the end-most portion of the bottom end through a continuous sealer.

6. (original) The method according to claim 5, wherein the step of moving the end-most portion of the bottom end through a continuous sealer comprises:

- (a) moving the end-most portion of the bottom end through a rotary sealer.

7. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein:

- (a) the step of forming a fin extending transversely across the unfinished base portion comprises moving the unfinished bag in a transverse direction; and
- (d) the step of folding a first end and a second end of the fin against the unfinished base portion to form a base comprises moving the unfinished bag in a longitudinal direction during the step of folding.

8. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein the step of folding a first end and a second end of the fin against the unfinished base portion to form a base comprises:

- (a) folding the first end and the second end by passing each of the ends under an inner bar and over an outer bar, the outer bars having a greater transverse distance therebetween than the inner bars; and
- (b) lifting each of the ends with the outer bars to form a fold between the inner bars and the outer bars.

9. (original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the step of lifting each of the ends with the outer bars comprises:

- (a) providing outer bars having an angled top surface extending from a first end of the bars to a second end.

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10. (original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
 - (a) sealing the first end and the second end of the fin against the unfinished base portion to form the base.
11. (original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
 - (a) attaching a label over the base.
12. (original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
 - (a) obtaining at least 20 sealed bags per minute by the method.
13. (original) The method according to claim 12, wherein the step of obtaining at least 20 sealed bags from the method comprises:
 - (a) obtaining at least 40 bags per minutes by the method.
14. (currently amended) A method of folding at least 20 bags/minute, the method comprising:
 - (a) providing an unfinished flat bottom bag having a sleeve defining a longitudinal direction and a transverse direction, the bag comprising a mouth end and a bottom end and longitudinal gussets extending from the mouth end to the bottom end, the bottom end having an unfinished base portion;
 - (b) opening the unfinished base portion and expanding the gussets;
 - (c) forming a fin across the unfinished base portion by sealing an end-most portion of the bottom end while the fin is moving; and
 - (d) folding a first end and a second end of the fin against the unfinished base portion to form a base.
15. (original) The method according to claim 14, wherein the method comprises folding at least 40 bags/minute.

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16. (currently amended) The method according to claim 15, wherein the step of forming a fin comprises:
 - (a) forming a crease between an end-most portion of the bottom end and the unfinished base portion; and then
 - (b) sealing the end-most portion of the bottom end to form the fin while the fin is moving.
17. (original) The method according to claim 16, wherein the step of sealing the end-most portion comprises:
 - (a) moving the end-most portion of the bottom end through a continuous sealer.
18. (original) The method according to claim 17, wherein the step of moving the end-most portion of the bottom end through a continuous sealer comprises:
 - (a) moving the end-most portion of the bottom end through a rotary sealer.
19. (canceled)